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Fliers from dry season

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Fliers from dry season

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Art in Sculpture + Extended Media at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

Noa Glazer Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art, Bezalel Academy of Fine Arts and Design at Jerusalem, Israel, 2009

Director: Ester Partegàs

Assistant Professor, Sculpture + Extended Media

Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia
May 2015

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Abstract

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Major Director: Ester Partegàs, Assistant Professor, Sculpture + Extended Media

In my studio practice I attempt to create sensual experiences from which nothing is learned and lack resolution; this thesis is an attempt to find ways to outline these experiences. However, this attempt will eventually lead to something entirely different, for these experiences are undefinable and impossible to investigate.

I will try to show how the components of the work, rather than forming a direct link to a chain of thoughts or associations, summon an experience that is derived only from the encounter itself.

Preface

Witches have no identity; they devour everything that touches them,
both feminine and masculine
wise and vacuous
ephemeral and timeless.

Arm pits filled with baubles, their heart a lump of molten salt.

They don't understand lucky charms; they don't recognize any of the places they have
been.

So they experience no longing and they have no intentions.

Their large pockets, they keep empty to fill them with their own laws.

Their clothes, their purpose is not to cover the body but to shake off all signifiers.

For that reason, a witch's hat is an empty signifier -

A tip of seismic movement dictated by the Atlanto-occipital joint.

This tip points upward, like a raised finger suggesting a direction.



Old spin, new pain

The outcome of a mechanical spin. An old spin leading to a wavy formation of a straw object. The movement has stopped, the object is now at its final rest, but not static. It takes a familiar form; four baskets nesting inside each other. The mind sets off to rural interiors, in different time settings, even those of today. From familiar to strange; a head cover that protects from a burning sun. Protecting a head that is preserved and frozen in cement; our modern basalt.

However easy it is to engage with its familiarity or strangeness, an alternative facet can be opened; an outlet for an experience that drifts away from recognition. Engaging with a pattern of endless triangular peep holes forming closed circular tunnels, each tunnel enclosing a smaller tunnel – the final one enclosed only by itself. An indifferent viewer encounters the object in his or her own peripheral vision blurred and doubled; a thin pale yellow film. This sturdy and light form might prevail if left alone though it might give in and tumble away like a ball of hay.

Thinking about it as architecture, I find an inadvertent resemblance to Tatlin's Tower, a monument that was intended by the Comintern to rise and shine in its radicality but was never to be built.

When wheat grows it turns gradually from young green to yellow, it dries up and burns into a hard skin – a shimmering yellow armor which forever retains its affinity with the sun.



The shark's eye buoyantly rests in a socket hole.
Eventually, it it will flip like the coin of chance tailward
to its sclerotic coat
in a nebula of blood and sand.



Used to relieve the driver from pain that is a result of the human condition. Wooden beads interwoven in a different way than woven straw, but nonetheless interwoven in mysterious ways, for these beads were connected by machine by methods of mass production.

A definitive geometrical shape that has a repetitive pattern covered in a thin powdery layer of 'slip', it appears to be part of a geology; pushed and molded by layers of earth. Transformed from a commodity to a materializing fossil.

The pressure points of the beads on someone's back are an intimate connection between an object and a human being. Intimate but unobtrusive – it is there exactly for that purpose; to be effective but inconspicuous, that is the true way for relief. Here, it is repurposed, detached from human beings, unconcerned and unyielding. Contained yet constantly flaking and on the edge of crumbling into nothing.

Vodka (^lvädkə), the distillation of mundane vegetables, has the same kind of quality though much more voluptuary than the prior mentioned. It has two effects; the first is a cold sensation in the mouth and throat, it slips down easily with such low viscosity. The less the taste and smell the greater the value. This has to do with what we want things to do to us; not to feel the influence, while it gradually increases. The second is harder to describe and links to its addictive qualities, which corrode the edges of perception. Visually, clear rubber boxes filled with vodka act like translucent spores in the space. They fill up and form mirrors of cold and blurry ambiance. The more the level of the liquid decreases, the more it exists in the ether, like time indicators generating the local time of the space.



Vacuums and cleansers

The salt slags or scoria lie close to the edges of the space or an object. They are ghost extensions of the architecture simulating invisible walls in addition to the existing ones. They have a low volume, relief like quality that causes them to be easily stumbled upon. In addition, they are set out as the edge of the atmosphere: Their materiality, salt and vodka, affect the ether of the space; drying and cleansing it and discharging a somewhat clinical odor. Sometimes, powder is blown on to their edges, dead leaves collected and ground into fine dust. Added on is the dust coming from the outside. Nestling in the air and propelling outward onto the walls and onto the things in the room. This is the same salt that exists in tears, sweat, *Essuntiki* soda, the sea etc. As a result, there are no set boundaries between all those things. They are porous membranes which have an intrinsic relationship with their surrounding

Empty carriers

The eastern lollipop is seen
On a limpid night
Its stick marks the direction
Low fog
Knee high
The myopic cannot use their sense of smell here
For there is no smell
Just humidity

Things are barely bare, barely existing.

One film is made out of salt, looking like seminal fluid; discharged, soothing, anesthetizing.

It is a preservative that works by equalizing the amount of salinity around it. Though it preserves living substances, a stinging sensation follows. This sting is due to the death of bacteria, which feed on the body, while maintaining an essential ecosystem; eating their way into it but allowing things to move and grow. It stings because the bacteria are part of us.¹

¹ This wild assertion is inspired by the Lecture given by Jane Bennet in The New School on her book, *Powers of the Hoard:*

Artistry and Agency in a World of Vibrant Matter, YouTube video, 1:14:44, uploaded on September 27, 2011, hosted by the Vera List Center for Art and Politics. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q607Ni23QjA>

Second is a film that camouflages like a water resistant insulator but it is an illusion; it dissolves in water.

To dissolve, to lose mass; excess or crucial, to become barely there, that is the encounter! the encounter with an indeterminate state, it never exhausts itself.

Both films are the outermost element of a system that looks like a sleeping bag or a carrier at the least. Both can come off with water, they rely on it to be dry.

A sleeping bag without a film of deception or agitation is never the right carrier. For things need a protection that agitates the living component within them. However, the encounter with these sleeping bags is when they are empty, absence of a body.

The carrier with the dissolvable film proposes a system of potential disaster, though such a system is not intended for one with a body; this long slender thing, perhaps because it was once human still hangs on to old habits – it sets itself to rest in a sleeping bag. It is laid out in the space for the thing to arrive. A pale carrier that appears to be deflated. Its hood; a hole making its way through the long thin volume, capturing emptiness, emptiness which becomes volume.



Dream scheme

In sleep are there ever any dreams or are they all invented only at the moment of awakening?

On the carrier with the preserving film of salt there are circles divided by lines with spaces in between them, this is a diagram of the empty area where the carousel on a slide projector usually sits. When I decided to quilt the slide projector's surfaces on the sleeping bag carrier, I did not know of Giacometti's attempts to find visual schemas for his dreams. However, I now find an interesting connection between them.

In his text written in 1946, *The Dream, The Sphinx and The Death of T.*², Giacometti writes of a disc divided by lines into sections in order to recount a dream, a dream within that same dream and, subsequently, the waking dreams following that dream. In each of the sections he wrote down the name, date and place of the event in the dream/ waking dream. He found it hard to reconstruct things that were in “a confused mass of times”³ when he tried to show every incident in the dream vividly. He found it curious how a certain object in his dream would dissolve and find itself in another place in the dream.

² Giacometti, Alberto and Wright, Barbara, *The Dream, The Sphinx and The Death of T.*, Grand Street, 1 October 1995, Issue 54, pp.146-154

³ Sylvester, David, *Looking at Giacometti*, Chapter 7: *With Slight Variations*, p. 70, Henry Holt and Company Inc., New York, 1996.

In his text, Giacometti comes to the conclusion that things in the dream occurred simultaneously and that time was horizontal and circular.

On the edge of the disc opposite each section he imagined a panel, each one of different width. He wanted to write the story of the dream on the panels, however these panels remained empty. In his own words, he could not fill them because he did not “..know enough about the value of words or their relationships to be able to fill them in”.⁴ However, according to David Sylvester in his book, *Looking at Giacometti*, Giacometti was able to find that value in his practice:

*“..he (Giacometti) wanted to use an object in space as a rigid construction upon which to register fugitive experiences...within compact, upright, frontal configurations with ideal beauty parallel to that of the geometry of the panels”.*⁵

The empty slide projector without the carousel and without the slides enhances the spaces that perpetually exist in its structure. The slide projector or ‘the dream maker’ without the anxiety of getting a fact scripted on to it is in its empty state. In its empty state it does not make any images, however it is in itself an image as well. A threaded tattoo that is imposed onto the surface to signify, like an ‘x’ on a map, the place for a real projector.

⁴ Sylvester, David, *Looking at Giacometti*, Chapter 7: *With Slight Variations*, p. 74, Henry Holt and Company Inc., New York, 1996.

⁵ Sylvester, David, *Looking at Giacometti*, Chapter 3: *A Time-Space Disc*, p. 14, Henry Holt and Company Inc., New York, 1996.

Bibliography

Bennett, Jane, *Powers of the Hoard: Artistry and Agency in a World of Vibrant Matter*, YouTube video, 1:14:44, uploaded on September 27, 2011, hosted by the Vera List Center for Art and Politics.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q607Ni23QjA>

Giacometti, Alberto and Wright, Barbara, *The dream, the sphinx and the death of T.*, *Grand Street*, 1 October 1995, Issue 54, pp.146-154.

Sylvester, David, *Looking at Giacometti, Chapter 3: A time-space disc*, Henry Holt and Company Inc., New York, 1996.

List of images

Fliers from dry season, detail, 2015

Reticulated foam, molten salt

Old spin, 2015

Plaited straw

New pain, 2015

4 Beaded car seats, slip coating



, detail, 2015

3 transparent cardboard boxes casted in urethane rubber filled with 12 litres of vodka

Dissect, detail, 2015

Salt film, dyed muslin

Vita

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